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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CANBERRA 000041

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/17/2020  
TAGS: [SENV](#) [PREL](#) [KGHG](#) [AS](#)  
SUBJECT: AUSTRALIA FOCUS ON COPENHAGEN ACCORD, CHINA

REF: A. SECSTATE 3079  
[1](#)B. 09 CANBERRA 1070  
[1](#)C. WONG-STERN JAN 14 TELCON

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Daniel A. Clune, Reasons 1.4(B)(D).

[1](#)1. (C/NF) Summary: Australia is prepared to notify the UNFCC Secretariat that it associates itself with the Copenhagen Accord and to submit its targets or actions by January 31. China and the U.S. should be the first countries to take such action, in the Australian view, in order to shore up support for the Accord. Looking forward, Australia sees three strategies to move toward a comprehensive global climate change regime: continuing to work in the UNFCCC, moving the work to the Major Economies Forum (MEF), or working with Mexico on a Friends of the Chair approach. PM Rudd has a concrete action plan, which he was prepared to propose to the Secretary during her postponed visit that focuses on joint U.S.-Australia planning on how best to approach China. If China fails to associate itself with the Accord, Parkinson said, it would seriously jeopardize passage of Rudd's domestic climate legislation. End Summary.

#### THE WAY FORWARD

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2.(C/NF) DCM met with Martin Parkinson, Secretary of the Department of Climate Change (DCC), and Jo Evans, Acting Deputy Secretary, on January 15 to deliver points in ref. A and discuss Australia's diplomatic engagement in support of the Copenhagen Accord. Parkinson said that Australia was in contact with Special Envoy Stern and engaged in a series of small group discussions with approximately 30 countries involved in the negotiation of the Accord. DCC Deputy Secretary Howard Bamsey is currently on travel in Europe discussing strategies to speed this process and will stop in New York for meetings with U.S. officials.

[1](#)3. (C/NF) In Parkinson's view, there are three ways to approach this year's negotiations. The first would be to

continue to push in the UNFCCC, but the Secretariat is uncooperative and this strategy would fail. The second is to move negotiations into a forum like the MEF, which Australia strongly supports, but would require a strategy to move any MEF-level agreement back into the overall UNFCCC and deal with the ability of obstructionist countries to block consensus. The third would be to work with Mexico to set up another "Friends of the Chair" group (as with COP-15) and use that smaller group to push progress. Parkinson said Australia favors working with Mexico on a small group consensus, but is concerned about whether Mexico is prepared to take on the leadership.

#### RUDD'S CONCRETE PROPOSAL

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¶4. (C/NF) Parkinson confirmed that PM Kevin Rudd had been looking forward to presenting a concrete proposal on how to engage China on climate change to the Secretary during her planned visit to Australia (postponed due to the Haiti earthquake). Though not finalized, the plan would focus on joint analysis of benefits to China of early adoption of clean energy and emissions reduction and developing a common strategy to engage the Chinese leadership. Parkinson said that, in his prior experience as Secretary of the Treasury, China would only do what it saw in its own interest, so demonstrating that early action would be in China's own best interest is critical.

#### CHINA AND PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR AUSTRALIAN LEGISLATION

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¶5. (C/NF) If China fails to associate itself with and inscribe its pledges to the Accord soon, Parkinson said, it would seriously jeopardize passage of Rudd's domestic climate legislation (ref B). Even if the U.S., EU and others moved quickly, Australians would not support climate change action unless China signed a pledge alongside everyone else. Parkinson said the Department expressed concern to Chinese diplomats over the lack of ambition in the PRC's stated goal of a 40-45% reduction in carbon intensity by 2020. Following the Copenhagen meetings, the Australian Ambassador in Beijing urged China to follow up with action on its statements in support of the Accord.

#### COMMENT

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¶6. (C/NF) Parkinson and Evans told us that Rudd's concrete proposal is still very much a work in progress. We will be looking for opportunities to elicit further details as it is finalized and to conduct preliminary discussions on the idea with the Prime Minister before the Secretary's rescheduled visit.

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